# **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

July 27, 2011, 4:30p.m.

#### **Council Chambers**

| PRESENT          | ABSENT         |
|------------------|----------------|
| Rhea Baker-Ipek  | Greg Lewis     |
| Gil Palmer       | Trena Carter   |
| Rosalind Pegram  | Ian Kohen      |
| Shiva Rallapalli | Tony McClendon |
| John Roberts     | John Stroh     |

### **Unofficial Meeting Due to Lack of Quorum**

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Director Lorraine Smith, Deputy Director Frances Jordan and Secretary Lula Young.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

May Minutes held for quorum review.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Director Smith reported \$10,917.15 as the Donations Account balance

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:**

Chairperson Palmer shared information with Commissioners and Staff about the recent discovery that Columbus has a serious housing shortage. After the recent announcement by Cummins Inc. that 600 new jobs will be located in Columbus, new employees are having difficulty in obtaining housing. Upon further research it was discovered that all but five of the local apartment complexes are already full to capacity.

He went on to report on additional factors contributing to the increased demand for housing, such as the down-sizing of three military bases and with Camp Atterbury as the designated processing center, as many as 25,000 service members, and families may be relocating to this area within the near future. Discussion ensued.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

After being introduced to the new Deputy Director, Frances Leigh Jordan, by Director Smith, Commissioners individually provided the deputy director with a short biography.

Director Smith informed the Commissioners that Deputy Director Jordan completed her first intake this week and she would be attending the 2011 EXCEL conference in Baltimore and the Indianapolis Technical Assistance Seminar, both hosted by the EEOC Training Institute.

Director Smith informed Commissioners of personnel changes that had recently occurred within City Hall. Affected departments were Engineering and Planning.

The Director also advised Commissioners that the Budget Hearing went quickly, lasting only a few minutes. Director Smith reported that City Council Liaison, Priscilla Scalf had completed two interviews in the new commissioner selection process.

Director Smith reported that staff had completed several intakes and requests for technical assistance. The complaints filed involved HUD filings based on National Origin and Disability with one complaint

dual-filed with CHRC and EEOC on the basis of sex and sexual orientation in employment. Technical assistance was provided for eight people involving, pregnancy, Fair Labor Standards Act, national origin in housing and Department of Labor issues. Discussion ensued.

The Director continued her report advising of the presentations she had made within the community to the Chamber of Commerce and to both the Sunrise and Noon Rotary clubs.

As an update of CAMEO activities, Director Smith reported that the Indian Associated hosted the film, "Today's Special" and had approximately 125 attendees. The next film to be shown will be "Pressure Cooker" on October 10, 2011, sponsored by the African-American Association. Other CAMEO activities include collaborating with The Republic to create a Community Directory of services and culturally diverse opportunities. As a result of the Welcoming Community initiative, the creation of a 'Community Portal', a one-stop-shop for community information and activities such as the United Way Center, is being researched. CAMEO representatives have also met with the Columbus Philharmonic conductor to plan a joint culturally diverse program to possibly occur beginning in October.

Director Smith concluded her report by informing Commissioners that the Heritage Fund CEO position had transitioned to Tracy Souza; the annual Juneteenth celebration at Mill Race Park was fairly-well attended with several political candidates in attendance and that she attended the ISMF breakfast, which she felt that as the ISMF final event for the foundation was a symbol of the loss to the community. Discussion ensued.

# **OTHER BUSINESS: Welcoming Community Presentation:**

Tabled for next meeting due to lack of a quorum.

## **DISCUSSION: Annual Dinner Survey Results:**

Director Smith reviewed annual dinner survey results with Commissioners. Although only a small number of surveys were received compared to previous years, the over-all results were positive. Commissioners voiced observations about the reduced participation and made suggestions to improve survey participation, such as utilizing laptops and other technology to ensure participation or drawing attention to the surveys while at the podium. Discussion ensued.

### **LIAISON UPDATE - P.A.C. - Pride Alliance Columbus:**

On behalf of P.A.C., Commissioner Baker-Ipek invited Commissioners and staff to attend the Pride picnic on Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup> in Mill Race Park at 4:00p.m.

Commissioner Baker-Ipek announced that Pride Alliance Columbus was starting an oral history project. Commissioner Baker-Ipek also announced the initiation of the Safe Dates project sponsored by Deputy Prosecutor Kelly Benjamin. The focus of the project is to assist community leaders, with the help of the middle schools, educate eighth grade students about teen dating violence with a goal of reducing future domestic violence. A binder will be housed in the Commission's library as a community resource.

### <u>LIAISON UPDATE – IMMIGRATION ISSUES COALITION:</u>

Commissioner Pegram reported that over 300 people attended the June 2011 Immigration Law presentation by the Mexican Consulate in Indianapolis. She was surprised to learn that 95% of all Hispanic arrests are alcohol related. Discussion ensued.

### **OPEN FORUM:**

Deputy Director Jordan asked Commissioners to share any information and photos of Commission-affiliated or sponsored activities within the community to use on the City's new website.

### **ADJOURNMENT**:

Unofficial meeting adjourned.